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Academic industrial relations in Australia: an historial overview

Diana J. Kelly

University of Wollongong, di@uow.edu.au

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UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

New South Wales
AUSTRALIA



**Academic Industrial Relations in Australia:
An Historical Overview**

A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

Diana Kelly

1999

DECLARATION

I, Diana Kelly, certify that this thesis has not been submitted previously as part of the requirements of another degree and that it is the product of my own independent research.

Signed:_____

Diana Kelly
1999

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Eileen Kelly and the late Bern Hosie, clever women constrained by the limits of their time, who nevertheless rose to their particular brilliance and who always supported women's scholarly endeavours.

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Di Kelly
Department of Economics,
University of Wollongong
December, 1999

ABSTRACT

This history of academic industrial relations in Australia from the 1950s to the 1990s examines the ways in which assumptions, methods, and objects of analysis have been shaped by ideas and events external to the field of study. As an uncertain interdisciplinary field, Australian academic industrial relations was as open to influences from changes in social and political norms, public policy and the changing imperatives of higher education, as it was to the ideas of scholars in the USA and UK, and those from nearby older disciplines. Within academic industrial relations, the tensions arising from dealing with these often competing influences were exacerbated by the rival models of unidisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity for the study of industrial relations. Moreover, the very notions of what constituted academic industrial relations were constantly under question, right through to the 1990s when the managerialist HRM approaches to the study of work and employment appeared to threaten the existence of industrial relations as a field of study. This historical overview traces and analyses all of these influences, and the ways they interacted with each other in shaping the field of study. All of these patterns of influence emphasise the importance of taking account of environmental influences and the transmission of ideas in a disciplinary history.